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EUR - Mr. Merchant

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY November 5, 1954  
SOURCESMETHODSEXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2007

EE - Ray L. Thurston

Question of detachment of Albania from the Soviet bloc.

I am referring to your memorandum of October 7, 1954 to Mr. Elbrick asking that, in view of the Trieste settlement, urgent thought be given to the question of whether or not it is now feasible to embark on an active plan of campaign to detach Albania from the Soviet bloc.

Background:

From the time of the Tito-Cominform break until October 1953 the problem of the Albanian situation received extensive consideration in the Department, in CIA, and in the Defense establishment. Throughout that period, it was also the subject of an informal exchange of views with the British.

We had arrived last year at a point where, by agreement with the British and French, we were about to invite them to participate in tripartite discussions on Albania with a view to evolving a common policy and a course of action which would anticipate various contingencies in developments relating to Albania. Our draft notes in this regard were never sent because of intervening events (viz. the Italian elections and the Trieste crisis).

Possible action:

If the present circumstances, following the Trieste settlement, were considered favorable for the initiation of steps looking toward a detachment of Albania, EE would propose to resume the line of action which was contemplated last year and, in the first instance, to seek consultation with the British and French. This consultation would be directed primarily toward agreement on measures which might be taken for the purpose of assuring the independence and territorial integrity of Albania in a number of contingencies. It is anticipated that such measures would entail diplomatic approaches to the Yugoslavs, Greeks and Italians in view of their respective interests in Albania.

Simultaneously, we would propose to ask CIA for an up-to-date assessment of capabilities and prospects of a plan to detach Albania. Assuming sufficiently favorable results from these steps, we would proceed to a coordinated US consideration of implementing a plan of detachment.

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Obstacles

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Obstacles to Proposed Action:

The Yugoslav, Greek and Italian interests in Albania are of such a nature and strength that it would be unwise to launch any project for the detachment of Albania without careful diplomatic preparations to forestall a resulting situation which would be more disadvantageous to the West than the present status of Albania. However, at this early stage of development in Yugoslav-Italian and Balkan Pact affairs following the Trieste settlement, it seems inadvisable to intrude potentially divisive Albanian considerations.

Similarly, it would be highly injudicious to initiate a project for detachment without certain preliminary understandings with the British and French. But neither party has for some time shown an interest in exploring the Albanian problem. On the contrary, the British have recently indicated a disinclination to pursue the matter further at this time.

In present circumstances, to raise with the French the problem of attempting to assure Albanian independence and territorial integrity might well arouse French suspicions that we are contemplating actions which they would consider rash. This, in turn, could make an adverse impact upon current efforts to integrate France into the Western European alliance stemming from the Paris agreements, which is obviously a matter of superior concern to us.

Within the past two weeks we have been informally advised by middle level officers of CIA that their current estimate of capabilities as regards a successful detaching operation is considerably lower than heretofore. The distinct impression which they gave is that an official reassessment of the prospects for such an undertaking would be substantially negative.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

In view of the foregoing major considerations, among others, it appears that the resolution of the Trieste problem has not produced a situation which as yet is sufficiently favorable to the consideration of a project for the detachment of Albania.

It also appears inadvisable at this time to initiate the preliminary action which, otherwise, would appear indicated.

EE, therefore, recommends that the Albanian situation be kept under continuing surveillance with a view to the development of conditions more propitious to the consideration of a project in this regard.

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There are attached for your reference: Tab A — a somewhat more detailed current SE analysis of the question; Tab B — the CIA estimate of December 30, 1952; Tab C — the draft note of January 14, 1953 to the British with an enclosed outline of US views on Albania.

**Attachments:**

As stated above.

cc: U/OC - Mr. Higgs  
EE - Mr. Stevens

SUR:EE:HJNickels:bab

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